Activities of NIVH

376. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are carefully monitoring the activities of the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped (NIVH), based in Dehradun;

(b) what are its present activities;

(c) whether there is any scope to expand its activities to States where no such institute is available;

(d) whether the NIVH will consider proposals to conduct camps outside Dehradun;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) what steps are proposed to bring visually handicapped people into the mainstream?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The present activities of the Institute mainly are:—

(i) Manpower Development: The Institute conducts long term training programme such as Primary and Secondary level Teacher Training Programme and Orientation and Mobility Instructors Training Programme as well as short term training programme such as Refresher/Orientation Courses and workshops for the professionals and others working in the field of visually handicapped.

(ii) Education and Vocational Training : The Institute runs Model School which provides education from pre-school to class 12th and Training Centre for the Adult Blind which provides vocational training in Light Engineering, Chair Caning, Braille Shorthand, Typewriting, Handloom Weaving, Electronics, Orientation and Mobility, Candle and Chalk Making and Telephone Operation.

(iii) Service Programmes : The Institute provides Placement Services, Therapeutic help to newly blinded, Guidance and Counseling and runs National Library for the Print Handicapped and National Talking Books Library.

(iv) Production Activities : The Institute is engage in Manufacture of Braille and runs Central Braille Press.

(v) Extension Services : The Institute has established a Regional Centre in Chennai and Regional Chapters at Secunderabad and Calcutta which are engaged in activities like Vocational Training, Placement, Community Based Rehabilitation Short-term Training Programme and Library Services.

(vi) Research : The Institute is also engaged in research activities in the field of Psycho-social and educational aspects of visual disability, Development of contradictions and abbreviations in different languages, Development of Braille Shorthand system in different Indian languages and Developments of Prototypes for Assistive Devices.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Yes, Sir. NIVH is already conducting camps outside Dehradun.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) The activities of the Institute in the fields of Education, Vocational Training, provision of Assistive Devices, Employment, Counselling and Guidance, Library Services and Braille/Talking Books will help the visually handicapped to be self-reliant and in bringing them in the mainstream.

Comprehensive Pension Policy for Older Persons

377. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether a proposal for comprehensive pension scheme for the older persons is under consideration of Government;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any survey has been conducted to assess the number of older persons;

(d) if so, what is the total number of such persons in Andhra Pradesh; and

(e) whether the scheme will be fully funded by the Union Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment had commissioned, in August, 1998, a project OASIS (an acronym of Old Age Social & Income Security) to examine policy questions connected with old age income security